



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana

VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 27 • July 23, 2010



IM Weekly Highlights



- Shelters at the Antelope Peak, Ellis and Mauer sites were all installed.
- New microwave antennas and ice shields are installed at the Mac Pass site for the hop to Lost Creek.
- The new tower for XL Heights is expected to arrive today.
- The replacement tower foundation for the Lost Creek site was poured.

IM Begins Consortia Meetings on Funding

By Ian Marquand, IM Public Affairs and Outreach
marquand.im@gmail.com

Leaders from Interoperability Montana (IM), Public Safety Services Bureau and Montana's Information Technology Services Division have been back on the road this week to share information about future local government funding sources for IM. The funding method is the largest piece left undecided in IM's new business plan.

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The outreach team consists of IM Executive Director Kevin Bruski, PSSB Chief Carl Hotvedt and ITSD "loaned executive" Kyle Hilmer. Earlier this month, they began sharing three funding options with IM participants via Internet webinars. This week, they began meeting face-to-face with members of individual IM consortia. Consortia members also were encouraged to invite county commissioners, tribal council members and other community leaders.

Hilmer's research into possible funding sources has led to three options for local contributions. All three would rely on cities and counties paying into a fund for maintenance and IM operations. In return, jurisdictions that "own" IM communications sites would receive payments from that fund to reimburse their site maintenance expenses. (Hilmer estimated annual site maintenance costs could reach approximately \$11,000 per year per site. Actual county expenditures could be lower.)

The three funding options are:

- A "\$1.00 per person" annual fee based on county population.
- A "MACo-style" system of fees based on the taxable value of property within the county/tribe.
- Annual user fees of \$200 per IM user. (One user could have both a mobile and a hand-held radio.)

The first meetings took place in Lewistown (July 19), Wolf Point (July 20), Sidney (July 21), and Bozeman (July 23), focusing on three questions:

- 1) Which proposed funding model do local jurisdictions support?
- 2) When should local jurisdictions begin paying for IM services?
- 3) What is a reasonable initial level of reimbursement to site owners for actual site maintenance costs?

In the Lewistown meeting, Central Montana Consortium members told the team they preferred: 1) User fees; 2) Payment to begin once a radio is activated on the IM system (with no grace period); and 3) 50% of the proposed reimbursement figure (about \$5,500/year) with increases over time. In Wolf Point, Northern Tier Consortium participants preferred: 1) User fees; 2) Payment to begin once a radio is activated on the IM system; and 3) 50% of the proposed reimbursement figure with increases over time. And in Sidney, Eastern Tier Consortium members preferred: 1) User fees; 2) Payment to begin once a radio is activated on the IM system; and 3) 100% of the proposed reimbursement figure with 50% to go to site owners and 50% to a reserve account to pay for unforeseen or catastrophic costs. The fourth meeting in Bozeman was still in progress at press time Friday.

More consortia meetings are scheduled for next week. All will take place from 9:00 am to noon. Details are in the "Upcoming Meetings" list on the following page.

Rockefeller to Introduce Legislation for Additional Public Safety Spectrum

By Dan Sullivan dsullivan@mt.gov

On July 21, Sen. Jay Rockefeller, IV, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, announced his intention to introduce legislation that will provide

public safety with 10 additional MHz of spectrum in the 700 band. Sen. Rockefeller said he will introduce the *Public Safety Spectrum and Wireless Innovation Act* shortly that will provide public safety with an additional 10 MHz of spectrum to support a national, interoperable wireless broadband network that will help protect people and keep them from harm.

"We need a forward-thinking spectrum policy that promotes smart use of our airwaves and provides public safety officials with the wireless resources they need to keep us safe," Rockefeller said. "This spectrum allocation will provide those who wear the shield with the resources they need to do their jobs. But more than that, by providing authority for incentive auctions, this legislation will offer a revenue stream to assist public safety with the construction and development of their network." A nation-wide public safety broadband network is estimated to cost about \$16 billion and will require Congressional authorization and funding.



To date, Congress has allocated 10 MHz of spectrum to the Public Safety Spectrum Trust. Sen. Rockefeller's bill would add an additional 10 MHz, making 20 MHz available for public safety broadband build-out.

The HAM will continue to monitor these national developments and provide you with updates.

IM to Present to Legislative Interim Committee

By Ian Marquand, IM Public Affairs and Outreach
marquand.im@gmail.com

Interoperability Montana (IM) has been invited to make a presentation before the Montana Legislature's Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee at its July 28 meeting in Helena. The IM portion of the meeting is scheduled from 10:15-11:00 am in Room 172 of the State Capitol.

IM will make a presentation on Statewide Interoperability, followed by public comment and committee questions. "What we've been told is that the committee has not discussed interoperable communications in any depth," said IM Public Affairs and Outreach Consultant Ian Marquand, who will be part of the presentation team. "They want to understand what the state has been doing and the role IM plays in achieving statewide interoperability. It's a great opportunity to tell our story to a group of key legislators."

FCC Grants Partial Relief of Interim Narrowbanding Deadline

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

A June 30 Federal Communications Commission (FCC) order partially grants relief from interim narrowbanding requirements that otherwise would have taken effect on Jan. 1, 2011. Specifically, the order gives flexibility to VHF/UHF Band licensees to continue to obtain 25 kHz-capable equipment for their existing systems until Jan. 1, 2013, which previously would have been prohibited as of Jan. 1, 2011. This will make it easier for licensees to manage the transition of their existing systems to 12.5 kHz capability. However, the FCC reaffirmed its commitment to timely completion of the migration to 12.5 kHz technology by the Jan. 1, 2013 deadline.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Mon., July 26**
I-15/90 Corridor and Tri-County Consortia
Butte • 9:00 am - noon
Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St.
- **Tues., July 27**
Western Consortium (WICC)
Missoula • 9:00 am - noon
Missoula Co. Courthouse, 200 W. Broadway, Rm. 374
- **Wed., July 28**
Northern Tier - West
Kalispell • 9:00 am - noon
Flathead County EOC
625 Timberwolf Parkway (**Please note new address**)
- **Wed., July 28**
Presentation on IM and Statewide Interoperability
Helena • 10:15-11:00 am
Legislative Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee, Room 172, State Capitol
- **Thurs., July 29**
Big Sky 11 Consortium
Billings • 9:00 am - noon
Yellowstone County EOC, 2305 8th Ave. North
- **Mon., Aug. 2 (Please Note New Date)**
IM Technical Committee (IMTC)
Helena • 9:00 am – 3:00
MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.
- **Wed., Aug. 4**
Tri-County Consortium
Helena • 10:30 am – noon
IM Offices at MACo, 2717 Skyway Dr.
- **Thurs., Aug. 5**
Mobile Data Terminal Consortium
Bozeman • 10:00 am – noon
SAR Bldg./Gallatin County EOC
219 E Tamarack